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ABSTRACT

Reading attitude has been of great concern since the 1960s. A sex-appropriate attitude toward reading can help learners become effective readers. A study compared the sex differences in attitudes toward reading among seven different Jewish groups. The groups included university students and adults from Reform, Conservative, and Orthodox denominations. The present investigation used the Mazurkiewicz Masculine/Feminine Attitude Inventory (1960) to survey the reading attitudes of the 208 participants. Results showed that 87% of the women viewed reading as sex appropriate, while only 48% of the men viewed it as sex appropriate. Results indicated that, compared to previous populations surveyed, more Jewish men viewed reading as sex appropriate. However, there was still a significant difference between the sexes regarding attitude toward reading. (Contains 2 tables of data and 35 references. Appendixes contain a glossary of related definitions, an additional table of raw data, and the survey inventory used.) (Author/NKA)

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ED 417 378

Gender Differences in Attitude Toward Reading in a Sample of the Jewish Community

By

Hermine Fendrick

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Abstract

Reading attitude has been of great concern since the 1960s. A sex-appropriate attitude toward reading can help learners become effective readers. The present study compares the sex differences in attitudes toward reading among seven different Jewish groups. The groups included university students and adults from Reform, Conservative, and Orthodox denominations. The present investigation used the Mazurkiewicz (1960) Masculine/Feminine Attitude Inventory to survey the reading attitudes of the 208 participants.

The results of this study showed that 87% of the women viewed reading as sex-appropriate, while only 48% of the men viewed it as sex-appropriate. The results indicated that compared to previous populations surveyed, more Jewish men viewed reading as sex-appropriate. However, there was still a significant difference between the sexes regarding attitude toward reading.

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Researchers have been questioning the causes of differences in reading achievement between boys and girls for a long time. Assumptions in the United States that were investigated were that 1) girls in the elementary school are better readers than boys; 2) girls are ready to read at an earlier age; 3) boys experience a higher incidence of reading disability and all other disabilities and therefore; 4) a universal lower achievement among males is due to a physiological-maturational cause. This viewpoint was widely accepted in the past, and is still the viewpoint by some researchers. Lincoln (1927) reported that between the ages of 7 and 12 years girls were anatomically 12 to 18 months more advanced than boys. Lincoln claimed that this resulted in the girls' academic superiority. Many others in the field including Stephens (1951) and Bentzen (1966) supported this belief.

If the physiological-maturational point of view that girls are better readers than boys is valid, one would expect that evidence of this would be confirmed around the world. Preston (1962) reported one important study that contradicted this belief. It compared reading achievement of German and American children in fourth and sixth grades. In America, the mean scores of the girls tested above those of the boys while in Germany, the means scores of the boys surpassed those of the girls. Preston surmised that,

> The apparent superiority of German boys to German girls - a situation quite unfamiliar to American educators - may be due to those not easily identified elements in German culture which result in the easy ascription of reading and learning to the normal activity of the male (p.353).

This idea that cultural influences could be a contributing factor to reading achievement was further implicated by the results of the Johnson's (1973) investigation of reading differences in four English speaking countries. Johnson compared the school population in Nigeria, England, Canada, and the United States. In Nigeria the boys were significantly ahead in three areas, and in England the boys were ahead in five areas. Five comparisons in the Canadian sample indicated that girls were the higher achievers, and all four significant comparisons in the United States proved the girls higher as well.

Other countries where girls were not found to be superior to the boys were Denmark, Japan, India, and Finland (Downing, et. al., 1979). Sheridan (1981) felt that strong parental influence was a major contributing factor for the high literacy rates in Japan. Gross (1976) determined that there were no significant differences in reading performance for boys and girls raised on a Kibbutz in Israel, where there was a relative lack of differentiation of socialization practices. Gross (1982) went even further to state "...that even if physiological factors may exert an influence on the emergence of dyslexia, it is equally possible that cultural factors

may render them inoperative" (p.58).

The development of sex-role standards is also based on the influence of the cultural environment. Kohlberg (1966) adopted a cognitive-developmentalist view of this matter. He claimed that children develop concepts of "masculinity" and "femininity" gradually and their behavior reflects these concepts. As the child matures, his/her sex-typing views change, and his behavior regarding sex-role stereotypes changes. This would explain the results of all of studies in the first grade that indicated that reading was neither a masculine nor a feminine activity.

Downing's and Thompson's (1977) study supported this theory. They depicted 12 stick figures performing a variety of activities, one of which was reading. The subjects had to determine whether the activity was suitable for a six-year-old "boy" or "girl". Only the first graders determined that reading was an activity for both boys and girls. The other subjects were from grades four, eight, twelve, university students, and adults. They all determined that reading was an activity for girls.

Kelly's (1986) study also concluded that kindergarten children viewed reading as activity for both boys and girls. This study used slides of children performing 60 different activities, nine of which were reading. The slide showed only the hands of the child so that the sex of the child could not be determined. The subjects ranged from kindergarten through twelfth grade. Every level except

kindergarten determined reading in general to be a feminine activity. It wasn't until second grade that sex stereotyped attitudes towards reading appeared.

It appears to be becoming more obvious that cultural priorities and the level of national concern are influential factors in the achievement of the literacy learner. If it can be proven that some cultures in the United States are able to instill a love of reading and an equality of achievement between the sexes, can we then look to these cultures to provide guidance so that boys in the United States will view reading as sex-appropriate? The Jewish population will be surveyed in this study to determine if the attitude that reading is masculine or feminine is an attitude that they ascribe to.

It has been proven through numerous surveys, to be discussed later, that in the United States reading is considered to be a feminine activity. It has also been proven that boys read material that pertains to boys while girls read material that pertains to boys and girls. Young girls are less rigid in their perceptions and will often involve themselves with masculine activities, but boys seldom will get involved with what they perceive to be feminine activities (Kagan, 1964). Boys appear to be more influenced by sex-role standards.

It has become obvious that some children's literature is sexist and there has been a strong push to remove such books and to make children aware of the sex stereotyping many books contain. As women and girls become the focal characters in reading materials boys could consequently read even less. If this is

the case, we need to look toward cultures where boys view reading as being a masculine activity as an example of what we need to do to change the attitudes of boys here.

Hypothesis

It is the hypothesis of this study that among the Jewish population reading is considered neither masculine nor feminine. There will be no significant difference between the men and women's attitudes toward reading. It is also hypothesized that there will be no significant difference between the Reform, Conservative, and Orthodox denominations in their M-F attitudes towards reading.

Method

Subjects

The subjects chosen included members of three temples located in East Brunswick, NJ. The temples consisted of the Reform Temple - B'nai Shalom, Conservative Temple - East Brunswick Jewish Center, and Orthodox Temple - Young Israel. The surveys were also distributed to students active in Chabad House, New Brunswick, NJ, Hillel of Rutgers, NJ, Hillel of Brandeis, MA, and

Hillel of Lehigh University, Bethlehem, PA.

Procedure

The Mazurkiewicz (1960) Masculine Feminine Attitude Inventory was used as originally developed except for the addition of one activity: Surfing the Net. There were 42 activities to label as mostly masculine (M) or mostly feminine (F). The "forced-choice" method was deliberately chosen for this research. The subject was permitted only two possible choices, M or F. This method was derived from psychological theories to uncover unconscious motivation.

Approximately 15 men and 15 women from each institution completed the survey. The surveys were distributed, completed and collected during a variety of meetings and activities held by the Jewish student groups and temples. The results were compiled and a chi-square analysis calculated to determine whether reading was sex-typed as a feminine activity.

Results

The seven groups of surveys were tabulated separately at first and these results can be seen in Appendix B. The surveys were then combined as to the denomination of the participant when it was known. These results can be viewed in Table I below. As illustrated in the table almost all of the Reform men view

Table 1

Masculinity/Femininity of reading as identified by men and women according to Jewish denomination

Male Surveys

	Masculine	Feminine	Total Surveys
Reform	02	13	15
Conservative	13	02	15
Orthodox	14	17	31
Totals	29	32	61

Female Surveys

	Masculine	Feminine	Total Surveys
Reform	00	15	15
Conservative	04	11	15
Orthodox	03	24	27
Totals	07	50	57

Chi Square = 14.95 > .01

reading as sex-inappropriate. Almost all of the Conservative men considered reading to be sex-appropriate. Approximately half of the Orthodox men considered reading to be sex-appropriate. The results of the surveys completed by the Conservative and Orthodox men are different than the results of most of the previous studies cited. In the majority of the previous studies, almost all of the boys considered reading to be sex-inappropriate. However, as noted by the chi-

square of 14.95, there is still a significant difference between the attitude of the men and women who were identified by denomination. Since most of the students in this study did not fill out denomination, all of the student surveys were combined and labeled unidentified by denomination. These results are shown in Table 2 below. The results of the students unidentified by denomination, plus

Table 2

Total sample of men and women completing survey including students not identified by specific Jewish denomination

Male Surveys

	Masculine	Feminine	Total Surveys
Identified Males	29	32	61
Unidentified Males	20	25	45
Totals	49	57	106

Female Surveys

	Masculine	Feminine	Total Surveys
Identified Females	07	50	57
Unidentified Females	06	39	45
Totals	13	89	102

Chi Square = 9.56 > .01

those of the men identified by denomination determined that 48% of all of the men surveyed consider reading to be sex-appropriate. When the results of the

identified and unidentified females were combined, 87% of the women considered reading to be sex-appropriate for women. The difference between the sexes was significant below the .01 level.

Discussion

The results of this study were similar to the results in a study by Steiner, Steinen, and Newman (1981) in two parochial schools. In their study boys and girls had sex-appropriate attitudes toward reading. In this study while only half of the men viewed reading as sex-appropriate, many of those who viewed it as sex-inappropriate told me that they thought the activity Reading on the survey meant "reading novels." They responded that had they known it meant any type of reading they would have considered it sex-appropriate. Steiner, Steinen, and Newman (1981) felt that their population might be atypical because the parents of these children might be more supportive of school and reading programs than the parents of children in public school. Since the students that I surveyed were in moderately difficult universities (Brandeis, Lehigh, and Rutgers) these students probably had parents that were supportive of school as well. These schools also accepted students that had superior reading achievement. More of the men in this survey would consider reading to be sex-appropriate because there is a higher frequency of sex-appropriate perceptions when there is no difference in reading

achievement.

When examining the surveys of the men who were Conservative and Orthodox, it is important to understand that these men are brought up to believe that they should read and study. This attitude toward learning could account for the high percentage of Jewish professionals. Most of the adults participating in this survey were professionals. As Downing (1973) pointed out, "...cultural priorities influence the educational environment of the literacy learner" p.122.

Finding willing participants for this study proved to be a challenge since the idea of prescribing sex specific attitudes for activities is no longer considered "politically correct" in the United States. Many people were reluctant to complete the survey for this reason.

Further research is indicated to see if there is a change in attitude toward reading in the general population. If there is no change and the majority of the men still consider reading to be sex-inappropriate, the Jewish population could be examined to determine how the boys learn that reading is sex-appropriate.

It was of further interest that of the 106 surveys completed, 105 of the people considered "Surfing the Net" to be a male activity. This factor could be used to our advantage by encouraging boys to read on the computer. Perhaps they would identify with the use of the computer and not think about the femininity of reading.

Social-Cultural Factors and Reading

In the United States

Research concerning sex differences in reading achievement generally favors the girls. This has been particularly true in the United States, and thus far there has been no conclusive evidence as to the causes of these differences.

Mazurkiewicz (1960) hypothesized that males viewed reading as a predominately female activity. Mazurkiewicz compiled a list of forty-one activities that would be classified either masculine or feminine by the participants. He tested his initial hypothesis by surveying the faculty at Lehigh University where he was directing the Reading and Study Clinic. He also surveyed his developmental reading classes. Both groups confirmed Mazurkiewicz's hypothesis that males viewed reading as a mostly feminine activity. This study indicated that both males and females viewed reading as a mostly feminine activity.

Mazurkiewicz continued his research with a study of eleventh grade students and their fathers in Bethlehem, P.A. One hundred and fifty-seven father/son pairs participated. In this study 80.9 percent of the students viewed reading as a mostly feminine activity, while 72 percent of the fathers held the same viewpoint. It appeared that the father's attitude toward reading did not have a big impact on the son if he was enrolled in an academic program, but in the case of the vocational student, the father's attitude influenced his son's much more

significantly.

Gates (1961) studied sex differences in reading ability of 13,114 subjects (6,646 boys and 6,648 girls) in grades two through eight in twelve school systems in ten states. On 21 comparisons made on tests of speed, vocabulary, and level of comprehension, the mean raw scores for girls were higher. Gates concluded that, on the average, girls' reading abilities exceeded those of boys. He commented that maturity did not explain the superiority of the girls because, in his study, the girls were superior in the upper grades as well as the lower grades. Environmental, rather than hereditary factors were suggested as causes for the differences in achievement.

Balow (1963), in a study of 151 girls and 151 boys with equivalent mean IQs found that the girls were slightly superior to the boys in a reading readiness test. However, when reading readiness was held constant, using an analysis of covariance, no significant differences were found between the reading achievement of boys and girls at the end of grade one. Balow inferred from this study that the data supported the non-maturational, cultural theory of sex differences in reading achievement because perception and readiness appear to be affected by training.

Kagan (1964) expanded upon Mazurkiewicz's findings that reading achievement scores were higher for boys who considered reading to be a feminine activity. Kagan suggested that sex-role standards could be a factor in school

achievement. Kagan found that a majority of second and third grade children considered many of school activities and objects (e.g. books) to be feminine in nature.

Marcus' (1972) study of reading attitudes indicated that none of the vocational students' fathers viewed reading as a masculine activity. Marcus reviewed responses from 30 father/son pairs. The Masculine Feminine Attitude Inventory (MFAI) was used, and sixty-three percent of these fathers viewed reading as a feminine activity. When Marcus conducted this survey, he allowed a third choice (M/F). Thirty-seven percent of the vocational students' fathers made this choice as did fifty-nine percent of the academic males and fifty percent of the vocational males. The curriculum that the students were enrolled in did not significantly influence their attitude.

Stone (1975) replicated Marcus' study using one 133 eleventh grade students. Stone administered Mazurkiewicz's (1960) Masculine Feminine Attitude Inventory. The choice of M/F was also made available. Of the students enrolled in an academic curriculum, approximately forty-nine percent of the males and forty-eight percent of the females stated that reading is a feminine activity. Only nine percent of the males and eight percent of the females viewed reading as a masculine activity. Even fewer of the males in the non-academic classes (four percent) viewed reading as a masculine activity, while 44 percent viewed reading as a feminine activity. Approximately 12 percent of the female

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students considered reading to be a masculine activity, while 59 percent viewed it as a feminine activity. Stone felt that some of the poorer readers attributed their lack of ability to the fact that they considered reading to be a feminine activity.

Shapiro, J. E. (1980) conducted a study to determine if the sex of the teacher influenced the achievement of the student. Four male and four female teachers were selected and matched on the basis of teaching experience, heterogeneous placement of children in their classes, and similarity in their reading programs. The findings were that the girls in the second grade scored significantly higher. It was pointed out that female teachers in the first grade had taught all the children, so their initial exposure to reading was to a feminine model. What was significant was that all of the children had a more positive attitude with the male teachers.

Lehr (1982) was in agreement with the other researchers in regards to reading attitudes. She felt that there is a socio-cultural influence on peoples' beliefs. Lehr also cited the importance of the role of the parents in relation to the attitude of the child. "If they perceive reading as being important, then their children – sons as well as daughters – will probably do so too." (pp.746)

Kindergartners and First Graders

Many of the researchers found that among kindergartners and first graders,

there was no significant difference in attitudes towards reading. Bond and Dykstra (1967) conducted a very large study of first grade reading programs comprising 27 separate studies across the United States. The Cooperative Research Program in Reading Instruction was designed to determine if any one method of teaching reading was superior to all others. Common procedures for data collection and analysis as well as experimental procedures were established. The study examined i.t.a. versus Basal versus Basal Plus Phonics, Linguistic versus Basal, and Phonic/Linguistics versus Basal treatment comparisons. Their study concluded that no one method was superior. To conduct a successful reading program, a variety of methods must be incorporated. The success of the Language Experience approach indicated that the addition of language experience to any kind of reading program would be expected to make a valuable contribution.

Bond and Dykstra concluded that girls are superior to boys in reading achievement as well as general language ability. They did, however, go along with the theory that causes of sex differences in reading are related to environmental conditions within the society and the schools.

Research by Downing and Thomson (1977) investigated a study of six groups: first graders, fourth graders, eighth graders, 12th graders, teacher trainees, and randomly selected adults. In all of the groups except first grade reading was regarded as being appropriate for females, but the first graders determine that

reading was appropriate for males and females.

A follow up study by Downing, Dwyer, Feitelson, Jansen, Kemppainen, Matihaldi, Reggi, Sakamoto, Taylor, Thackray, Thomson (1979) found that in their study in the United States, the majority of the boys and girls viewed reading as sex-appropriate.

Steiner, Steinen, and Newman (1981) concluded that reading was not sex-typed as a feminine or masculine activity in their study. The study was conducted with students in grades one through four, from two parochial schools. They stated that given a different population of students their findings might have been different. The students in this study also demonstrated higher than average achievement scores. The authors did express concern that the parochial population might have different reading attitudes, achievement records, and reading perceptions because the parents might be more supportive of school and reading programs than the parents of non-parochial school students. If this was not the case, then the biggest implication derived from their study might be that there is a trend away from sex-differences in reading attitudes.

Swanson (1982) conducted her study to investigate the reading attitudes of first graders, and to determine their attitudes after four months of reading instruction. The study was examining attitudes based upon sex and SES (socio-economic status). Swanson used two procedures: (1) two independent samples of 60 children were randomly selected from an urbanized population of 375 non-

repeating first graders attending school in Northeast Georgian County, and (2) a third sample was randomly selected from 275 first graders in rural Northeast Georgian County. Her study determined there to be no significant difference between boys and girls in their attitudes towards reading.

Kelly's (1986) study yielded similar results among the kindergarten population. She devised a picture test to determine the sex-role stereotypes of the students in the study. The test consisted of sixty slides depicting a variety of activities boys and girls do, including nine reading activities. Each slide focused on a clearly identifiable activity such as a chess game, tennis match, or a reading activity. Only the hands of the participant were visible so that the sex of the participant could not be determined. The children involved in the study were from kindergarten, grade 2, grade 4, grade 6, grade 8, and high school. They were each given an answer sheet on which to indicate if the child doing the activity were a ten year old boy or girl. Kindergarten students showed no significant variations in their responses indicating that reading attitudes are neutral at the beginning of school and change as the students mature and react to their perceived sex-roles. Although this study confirmed the belief that reading is a feminine activity, some of the reading activities were considered to be more masculine, some more feminine, and one was designated equally masculine and feminine. The materials considered to be masculine were a science book, a mystery book, and animal book and the T. V. Guide. A running book was considered equally

masculine and feminine.

Parker and Paradis (1986) found a different conclusion in their study. They sought to determine the answer to, "Do attitudes differ between boys and girls in primary grades or boys and girls in intermediate grades?" From a population in the Rocky Mountain region, a random sampling of ten subjects from twenty-four classes were chosen. The Heathington Primary and Heathington Intermediate Scales were used when determining that, throughout grades one - six the attitudes were that reading is more sex-appropriate for girls than for boys.

Shapiro (1990) conducted a study of sex-role appropriateness of reading and reading instruction to students involved in basal reading instruction versus the whole language approach. The study was to determine when sex-role appropriate attitudes begin to change, and if the reading instruction is the cause of the change in attitude to male sex-inappropriateness. The first phase of the study involved reading instruction using a basal reading series and seatwork, which focused on various reading skills. During this study, conversations between Shapiro and the children revealed that at the end of kindergarten and early in the first grade, most of the children were very enthusiastic about reading. This finding corroborated most of the studies that have been cited. By the end of first grade the children seemed to demonstrate frustration and boredom with the material that they were reading.

The second phase of the study utilized the whole language approach. In

grades one and two both boys and girls viewed reading as appropriate for their sex; however, an increasing number of boys began to view books as inappropriate for themselves. The boys in the whole language program did continue to consider reading and writing as appropriate for boys.

The results of this study do appear to suggest that the type of reading instruction may have a significant effect on the boys' view of the sex-role appropriateness of reading and writing.

The majority of the above investigations supported the findings of earlier research, which indicated that reading was perceived to be a feminine activity in the United States. Could this attitude result in a self-fulfilling prophecy for boys in the United States? An examination of studies conducted in other countries for a possible answer is warranted.

Outside the United States

In order to see if the superiority of girls is universally true, Klein (1977) recommended that we study the problem in other cultures. If girls do not surpass boys in all cultures we need to investigate why. Perhaps examining studies outside the United States will lead to some answers.

Preston's 1966 study helped to open the gates in other countries with respect to exploring sex differences in reading achievement. Preston compared

1,053 fourth - sixth grade pupils from Wiesbaden, Germany to 1,338 pupils from the public schools in Philadelphia and vicinity. The mean of the intelligence of both groups was judged to be above average. The testing was carried out in 1959. All subjects took the Frankfurter Test, prepared for use in German schools and the Gates Reading Survey comprehension sub-test. In reading comprehension, the scores of the American subjects in all but four subgroups is higher than those of corresponding German pupils. The American students also tested higher in speed. The German students tested higher in reading retardation as well. In both grades and on all tests, the means of the American girls exceeded those of the American boys. In the German sample, the reverse was true, with the exception of the speed test on the fourth grade level. In both grades and on all tests in America the incidence of retardation was higher among boys. This situation was reversed in the German population. The conclusion here is that sex differences are not unique to the United States, and the universal idea of girls being superior readers to boys is not necessarily valid. Preston notes that the majority of the teachers of young children in Germany are men, while the reverse is true in the United States.

Johnson (1973) conducted a study of reading achievement of sex differences in four English speaking nations. More than 1,000 elementary children from grades 2, 4, and 6 in Canada, England, Nigeria and Canada participated in the study. Of the 72 comparisons 18 showed statistically significant sex differences. The result of this study implies that the differences in

reading achievement are caused by social-cultural differences.

Since the sample was limited to four English speaking countries, three grade levels, and a relatively small sample of subjects at each grade level, the results must be viewed with caution. The study tested the hypothesis that "within grade, within country - there is no difference between boys and girls in the following scores: 1) vocabulary, 2) comprehension, 3) initial consonant score, 4) variant consonant score, 5) vowel sound score, and 6) structural analysis score. All of the subjects were selected form one community; they consisted of 50 boys and 50 girls that represented a cross-section of the population served.

The results of the tests concluded that girls in Canada surpassed boys on 14 of the 18 tests with one significant reversal being the grade 6-vocabulary test where boys surpassed girls. Generally boys performed better than girls in England with the highest differential appearing in grade four. Overall, the boys in England read better than the girls as measured by these tests. Comparing the means for the Nigerian boys and girls revealed that boys surpassed girls on 15 of the 18 tests. In the United States the result was that the girls did better than the boys on almost all aspects of reading that were measured. Johnson (1976) felt that the "Pygmalion" effect might be at play here. That is that the American and Canadian teachers expected the girls to do better so they tried harder, while all of the Nigerian teachers expected the boys to do better, and they did. The exception was England where six of the nine teachers said the girls generally read better, but

the study proved this to be false.

This study contradicted Morris' (1966) survey of reading attainments in the English County of Kent, which showed no significant sex differences. In addition, the regular government surveys of reading achievement show no significant differences in achievement between boys and girls.

Oommen (1973) notes that the boys in India surpass the girls in reading achievement. This may be due to the fact that, "Social causes are also an important factor in girls dropping out of school, betrothal, and the unwillingness of parents to send grown-up girls to a mixed school" (p.410).

Gross (1976) used an Israeli kibbutz to test her doubt that differences in reading were due to physiological differences. The hypotheses proposed were as follows: there would be no difference between kibbutz girls and kibbutz boys on the basis of 1) reading performance level, 2) reading readiness level, 3) rate of maturational growth, and reading level with respect to the correlates of 4) cross dominance and 5) a psychopathology score. The Kibbutz Artzi was selected for this study because it has more consistently maintained equality of the sex principles in child rearing practices, as well as communal control of their education. A sample of kibbutz subjects was taken from kindergarten, second, and fifth graders. A total of one thousand eight hundred and seventy-one subjects were used. Ortar's Hebrew Reading Comprehension Test was used to measure reading performance. All hypotheses were confirmed as stated. On the variance

crossed dominance, no significant differences had been shown to exist between boys and girls. No significance differences were demonstrated by sex on the mean scores for the Bender-Gestalt test. An analysis of the medical records found no significant statistical difference in psychopathology between the sexes. The slight difference that was found leaned in the direction of the girls.

In conclusion, the analyses indicated no significant sex differences between the boys and girls. Gross did point out however, the study disclosed that the Israeli's had not yet developed a standard test for reading readiness. The limitations of the instrument made such observations questionable.

Downing and Thompson (1977) conducted a study at the University of Victoria, Canada involving adults chosen at random from the community, university students from that community who were training as teachers, and the younger generation itself. The sex-role stereotype test consisted of twelve drawings of neuter stick figures each performing a different activity. The subjects had to say whether the activity was more suitable either for a six-year old boy or a girl of the same age. The tests resulted in support of the cultural expectations in North America, which are, more responses would indicate girl for the stick figure engaged in reading.

A study by Downing et al (1979), conducted in seven countries, revealed that in Denmark and Japan reading was regarded by males at all age levels as a masculine activity. In the other countries reading was rated masculine by the

youngest age group, but feminine by the older age groups.

Sheridan (1981) stated in her paper on Early Reading in Japan that when viewed cross-culturally there was a lack of reading problems among Japanese children and there was no significant difference between the boys and girls. The most powerful influence appears to be the intervention of the parents and the effect of preschool education in Japan. The Japanese mother is extremely concerned about her child learning to read. Parents buy books for their children from the time they are one year of age. Over ninety percent of the two-year-olds have their own books and are read to regularly. The mothers wanted their children to see the joy in reading. The influence of the attitude the society and the family have toward reading provides strong motivation to succeed in reading.

Osmont (1990), a London Infant teacher, studied two groups of children and their teachers. She quickly determined that the teachers made gender related judgements about the children they viewed as successful readers. All female teachers reported more girls than boys as their most successful readers, even when they had more boys than girls in the group. The male teacher perceived more boys than girls as his most successful readers. However, both the female and male teachers expressed more concern about the boys' progress than the girls. Osmont determined that even at this young age children had clear ideas about what adults at home usually read. The children saw considerable differences between their mothers and fathers as readers. The majority of mothers were seen

to read mainly fiction, while the fathers were seen as readers of newspapers, information books, and documents from work. Children's knowledge about their gender roles seems to include knowledge they have gained about adults as readers.

O'Sullivan (1992) conducted a study of reading attitudes in students from low-income families of New Foundland and Labrador. More female students at all grade levels found reading to be more useful, pleasurable, and interesting than the male students. The female students also had higher expectations for themselves at the time of the study and in the future. The male and female students both felt that they had control of the reading process and their ability to improve their reading performance. Both sexes saw reading as being important to their teacher, but the females considered it to be more important to their parents. The parents felt that reading was easier for their daughters. They also had higher expectations for their daughters.

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Appendices

Appendix A

Definitions

Attitude - "a predisposition ... to react specifically towards an object, situation, or value which is usually accompanied by feelings and emotions" (Good, 1973, p.49).

Forced Choice - the subject was only permitted two possible responses as "mostly masculine" or "mostly feminine".

Sex Inappropriate - that which is regarded by the learner as improper or incorrect for members of his or her own sex.

Sex-Role Expectations- those behaviors and characteristics that a society expects the members of each sex to exhibit.

Sex-Role Standards - an individual's concept of the behavior and attributes which are appropriate to each sex.

Stereotypes - "Stereotypes are verbal labels used as a shorthand in thinking; they are like pictures in the mind with ready-made associations that are generalized. Stereotypes usually refer to human groups, such as parsons, plumbers, Germans, Negroes, or Mothers-in-law; it is typical of stereotypes that they lead to overgeneralization, so that every member of the group is expected to have the alleged characteristics" (Oppenheim, 1966, p.211).

Appendix B

Raw Data

	Male Surveys		Female Surveys		
	Masculine	**Feminine**	**Masculine**	**Feminine**	**Totals**
B'nai Shalom Reform	2	13	0	15	30
EBJC Conservative	13	2	4	11	30
Young Israel Orthodox	7	8	2	13	30
Chabad House Orthodox	7	9	1	11	28
Brandeis	5	10	2	13	30
Rutger's Hillel	6	9	3	12	30
Lehigh Hillel	9	6	1	14	30
Totals	49	57	13	89	208

Appendix C

INVENTORY

Name: _____
Institution/Affiliation: _____
_____Reform _____Conservative _____Orthodox
Occupation: _____
Schooling Completed: _____
Age: _____18-25 _____26-40 _____41-60 _____Over 60

Both men and women participate in each of the activities below. However, some of the activities are associated more with men than with women. This is a sampling of your ideas about which activities are associated with men or women.

Classify the activities below by marking M or F before each activity using the following code. M equals Mostly Masculine Activities; F equals Mostly Feminine Activities. Example: Sewing, Mountain Climbing. Sewing would be placed under Mostly Feminine Activities while mountain climbing would be placed under Mostly Masculine Activities. Sewing has an F in front of it; mountain climbing would have an M in front of it.

Activities

___Sewing
___Sculpturing
___Hiking
___Swimming
___Cooking
___Dancing
___Climbing Trees
___Soccer
___Chess
___Tennis
___Housecleaning
___Model Boats
___Playing Poker
___Playing Poker
___Playing Pool
___Body Building
___Studying
___Jumping Rope
___Woodworking
___Carving
___Painting
___Singing
___Diving
___Reading
___Football
___Gymnastics
___Checkers
___Whittling
___Playing Bridge
___Checking Looks in Mirror
___Writing
___Golf
___Mountain Climbing
___Hockey
___Surfing the Net.
___Playing House
___Baseball
___Conscious about Clothes
___Playing with Dolls
___Model Railroads
___Playing Nurse
___Bowling
___Playing Pinochle